

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) fiscal year 2000 Annual Plan. The Annual Plan provides summaries of the specific work planned for the coming year and the framework and issues we plan to focus on over the next 2 to 3 years.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) mission is to regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of the public health and safety. The Annual Plan reflects the result of our strategic planning process aimed at concentrating our effort on key issues related to the primary mission of the NRC.

In the development of this Annual Plan, we obtained input from several sources, including the General Accounting Office, the nuclear industry, NRC senior managers, the Commission, Congress, and OIG's Annual Planning Conference.

Rather than set aside time to respond to unanticipated high priority issues that inevitably arise, we have programmed all our available resources and will reassess those priorities as necessary. This approach ensures that we use our limited resources only on high priority work.

Hubert T. Bell
Inspector General

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MISSION AND AUTHORITY

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) was established April 15, 1989, pursuant to Inspector General Act Amendments contained in Public Law 100-504. The mission of the NRC Inspector General (IG), as spelled out in the Act, is to: (1) conduct and supervise independent audits and investigations of agency programs and operations, (2) promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency within the agency, (3) prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in agency programs and operations, (4) develop recommendations regarding existing and proposed regulations relating to agency programs and operations, and (5) keep the agency head and Congress fully informed of problems in agency programs. The Act also requires the IG to report to the NRC Chairman and Congress semiannually on the results of OIG activities.

Accordingly, OIG is committed to ensuring the integrity of NRC programs and operations. Developing an effective planning strategy is a critical aspect of accomplishing this commitment. Such planning assures that audit and investigative resources are used effectively. To that end, OIG developed a Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 1998 - 2003 which includes four general goals and a number of supporting objectives that describe planned accomplishments.

This Annual Plan is the OIG's formal strategy for identifying priority issues and managing workload and resources for FY 2000. The Annual Plan reflects the interest and concerns of the nuclear industry, the General Accounting Office, Congress, and NRC senior managers, including the Chairman and Commissioners. The Annual Plan also serves as a basis for developing performance goals and measures envisioned by the Government Performance and Results Act. In particular, the Annual Plan addresses OIG's first Strategic Plan General Goal:

To add value to the NRC's technical and administrative programs, OIG will identify opportunities for improvement in the agency and conduct activities for the purpose of preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse in NRC's programs and operations.

Additionally, the Inspector General responded to an August 1998 congressional request for information on what this office considered to be the 10 most serious management challenges facing the NRC. The 10 most serious challenges identified were:

1. Developing and implementing a risk-informed, performance-based approach to regulatory oversight.
2. Developing information management systems and being able to anticipate and measure the benefits to be gained.
3. Responding to the impact of industry deregulation and license transfers.

4. Administering and overseeing agency procurement under Government contracting rules. Government contracting rules allow the opportunity for fraud to occur.
5. Effectively communicating with the public and industry.
6. Maintaining an unqualified financial statement opinion in light of new and existing CFO requirements.
7. Ensuring that NRC's processes, such as spent fuel cask certification and license renewal, are responsive to industry needs.
8. Ensuring that NRC's enforcement program has an appropriate safety focus and reflects improved licensee performance.
9. Refocusing NRC's research program to reflect a mature industry.
10. Responding to external influences for changing NRC's operations. For example, the ability to meet NRC's mission and requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act, as the result of a proposed agency reorganization, poses a significant challenge to NRC.

Over the past several years, OIG has invested a large portion of its audit resources performing substantive work which covered these and other NRC management challenges identified by the Inspector General. This Annual Plan reflects the OIG strategy for continuing to address these management challenges through planned audit activities.

AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION UNIVERSE

The NRC budget request for FY 2000 is \$471.4 million with a staffing level of 2,804 personnel. The agency's mission is to ensure that civilian uses of nuclear materials in the United States--in the operation of nuclear power plants, and in medical, industrial, and research operations--are carried out with adequate protection of the public health and safety, the environment, and national security. The agency also has a role in combating the proliferation of nuclear materials worldwide.

NRC is headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, and has four regional offices located throughout the United States. The agency also operates a technical training center located in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

NRC carries out its mission through various licensing, inspection, research, and enforcement programs. Currently, NRC responsibilities include regulating 104¹ commercial nuclear power reactors licensed to operate in 31 States; 37 non-power reactors; 8 major uranium fuel cycle facilities; 2 gaseous diffusion uranium enrichment plants; and activities

¹ NRC regulates 104 reactors, but one of these facilities (Browns Ferry 1) is not operating at the present time.

involving approximately 5,900 licenses issued for medical, academic, and industrial uses of nuclear material. (The NRC also oversees the Agreement States, which regulate approximately 15,000 such licenses.) The agency is also overseeing the decommissioning of 19 nuclear power reactors that it regulates. The audit and investigative universe is, therefore, composed of a myriad of programs, functions, and support activities established to implement NRC's mission.

PLANNING STRATEGY

The OIG Annual Plan reflects our strategic approach to planning. It identifies strategic or multi-year issues as well as specific areas to be covered during the current year. Although it is published annually, the Annual Plan is considered a "living" document and is modified throughout the year as circumstances, priorities, and/or resource availability dictate.

Effective planning requires extensive knowledge about the agency's mission and the programs and activities used to carry out that mission. Accordingly, we continually monitor, by means of our Issue Area Monitoring Program, specific issue areas to strengthen our internal coordination and overall planning process. OIG staff designated as issue area managers (IAM's) are assigned responsibility for keeping abreast of major agency programs and activities. The IAM's are a key component of our planning process. In addition, we align our planning efforts to the extent possible with the strategic arenas used by the agency in its planning process. Currently, NRC focuses on four strategic arenas: Nuclear Reactor Safety, Nuclear Materials Safety, Nuclear Waste Safety, and International Nuclear Safety Support. The agency also specifies goals and strategies for Management and Support, which cut across all NRC regulatory and support activities to accomplish the agency's overall strategic goals. This year, OIG's planning efforts concentrate on issues related to Nuclear Reactor Safety, Nuclear Materials Safety, Nuclear Waste Safety, and Management and Support, which is divided into three categories: Information Technology/Information Management, Financial, and Administrative/Human Resources Programs. We also focus on issues related to Nuclear Regulatory Research.

In addition, we have adopted a two-tiered approach to fulfill congressional financial statement audit requirements and to be responsible to the spirit and intent of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Passed by Congress in 1993, the GPRA mandates that Federal agencies establish strategic plans and prepare annual performance plans. The first performance plans, which were due in FY 1999, established measurable goals that defined accomplishments expected during the year. The GPRA also requires agencies to submit annual reports to Congress comparing actual performance to the goals expressed in the performance plan. The first of these reports, for FY 1999, is due on March 1, 2000. The GPRA does not require IG's to audit agency performance information. However, the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 requires IG's annually to audit their agency's financial statements, including an examination of performance data.

OIG's two-tiered approach will allow us to review NRC's performance information and meet the intent of the GPRA. For financial statement reporting purposes, OIG will review and evaluate the data used to support the NRC's broad outcome goals (first tier). OIG will also examine the data supporting the NRC's output measures (second tier). This second effort

will become a part of the OIG's regularly scheduled audit activity and will be conducted as part of the IAM program. To the extent possible, reviews conducted under each tier will examine the data systems used, and determine the accuracy and reliability of the data used to support reported outcome goals and output measures.

As the agency's strategic and performance planning efforts evolve, we will revise our planning approach accordingly. Also, some audits included in this plan may be superseded and other audits initiated.

Appendix I provides a summary of long-range audit strategies by issue area which we are addressing in this year's Annual Plan and a description of major issues we intend to address over the next 2 to 3 years. Appendix II provides a synopsis of the specific audits we plan to conduct during FY 2000. Specific investigations are not included in the plan because investigations are primarily based on reported violations of law and misconduct by NRC employees and contractors, as well as allegations of irregularities or abuse in NRC programs and operations. Appendix III contains a listing of the IAM's and issue areas for which they are responsible. Appendix IV contains a listing of abbreviations and acronyms used in this document.

PERFORMANCE GOALS

For FY 2000, we will continue to use a number of key performance goals and measures for gauging our audit and investigative work. These are:

AUDITS

1. Keep average cost per audit to .95 full-time equivalent (FTE) or less.
2. Complete audits in 5.2 months or less, on average.
3. Ensure audit quality by obtaining full compliance with audit standards per peer review.
4. Obtain customer feedback on all audit and special evaluation reports issued.
5. Obtain agency agreement on at least 80-90 percent of audit recommendations.

INVESTIGATIONS

1. Complete investigations in an average time frame of 8 months.
2. Apply an average of 185 hours or less on completed investigations.
3. Achieve a minimum rate of 25 percent of investigations being referred to the Department of Justice.
4. Achieve a minimum success rate of 90 percent for actions taken by NRC

management in response to reports issued by OIG (e.g., additional training, program reviews, and modifications).

5. Achieve a minimum success rate of 80 percent for Program Fraud and Civil Remedies Act cases accepted by NRC's Office of General Counsel.

OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

The following sections detail the approach used to carry out the audit and investigative responsibilities previously discussed.

AUDITS

The audit process represents the steps taken by OIG to conduct audits. This process involves several steps, ranging from annual audit planning to performing audit follow-up. The underlying goal of the audit process is to maintain an open channel of communication between the auditors and NRC management officials to ensure that audit findings are accurate and fairly presented in the audit report. Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-73 guidance, we plan our audit coverage using factors such as current and potential dollar impact; adequacy of internal control systems as indicated by risk assessments and reviews required by OMB Circular A-123; management needs; prior audit experience; and availability of audit resources.

The OIG performs the following types of audits:

Performance - These audits are conducted on selected NRC administrative and program operations to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency with which managerial responsibilities are carried out. They focus on whether management controls, practices, processes, and procedures are adequate and effective. Performance audits also include reviews of selected programs and activities to evaluate their overall effectiveness in achieving anticipated results.

Financial - These audits include the financial statement audit required by the Chief Financial Officers Act and other financial-related audits. These audits, which are compliance oriented, include reviews of such items as internal control systems, transaction processing, financial systems, and contracts.

The key elements in the audit process are as follows:

Audit Planning - Each year, OIG holds an information and planning conference. Additionally, we obtain input from other sources, such as the General Accounting Office, the nuclear industry, NRC senior managers, the Commission, Congress, and OIG staff. An annual audit plan is developed and distributed to interested parties. It contains a listing of planned audits to be initiated during the year and the general objectives of the audits. The annual audit plan is a "living" document that may be revised as issues warrant, with a subsequent redistribution of staff resources.

Audit Notification - Formal notification is provided to the office responsible for a specific program, activity, or function, informing them of our intent to begin an audit of that program, activity, or function.

Entrance Conference - A meeting is held to advise agency officials of the purpose, objectives, and scope of the audit, and the general methodology to be followed.

Survey - Exploratory work is conducted before the more detailed audit commences to gather data for identifying audit objectives, documenting internal control systems, becoming familiar with the activities to be audited, and identifying areas of concern to management.

Audit - A comprehensive review is performed of selected areas of a program, activity, or function using an audit program developed specifically to address the audit objectives.

Exit Conference - A meeting is held with the appropriate agency officials to present and discuss the results of the audit. This meeting provides agency management the opportunity to confirm information, ask questions, and provide any necessary clarifying data.

Draft Report - An official draft copy of the report is provided to the agency to obtain written comments on the audit recommendations. The agency is normally given 30 days to respond.

Final Audit Report - The final report includes the agency's official, written response to the draft report.

Audit Follow-Up and Closure - This process ensures that recommendations made to management are implemented.

As a supplement to the audit function, OIG also performs a limited number of Special Evaluations. These Evaluations examine the implications of NRC programs that affect national issues, such as high-level radioactive waste disposal, nuclear power plant decommissioning, or the use of radiation by the medical community in treating disease.

INVESTIGATIONS

The investigative process usually begins with the receipt of an allegation of fraud or mismanagement. Because a decision to initiate an investigation must be made within a few days of each referral, OIG does not schedule specific investigations in its plan. Investigations are opened in accordance with OIG priorities and general guidelines and in consideration of prospective guidelines that may be established by the local U.S. Attorneys for the Department of Justice. OIG investigations are governed by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency Quality Standards for Investigations, the OIG Special Agent Handbook, and various guidance provided on a periodic basis by the Department of Justice.

Only four individuals in the IG's office can authorize the opening of a case: the Inspector General, the Deputy Inspector General, the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, and the Senior Level Assistant for Investigative Operations. Every allegation received by OIG is given a unique identification number and entered into a database. Some allegations

result in investigations, while others are retained as the basis for audits, referred to NRC management, or, if appropriate, referred to another law enforcement agency.

When an investigation is opened, it is assigned to a special agent who prepares a plan of investigation. This planning process includes a review of the criminal and civil statutes, program regulations, and agency policies that may be involved. The special agent then conducts the investigation, which may require interviewing witnesses and subjects, reviewing and analyzing records, obtaining physical evidence, and conducting surveillance and/or undercover operations. If the special agent determines that a crime may have been committed, he or she will discuss the investigation with a Federal and/or local prosecutor to determine if prosecution will be pursued. Upon completion of the investigation, the special agent prepares an investigative report summarizing the facts disclosed during the investigation.

The investigative report is distributed to prosecuting attorneys and to agency officials who may have an official interest in the results of the investigation. In those cases where a prosecuting attorney decides to proceed with a criminal or civil prosecution, the special agent assists the attorney in any preparation for court proceedings that may be required. This assistance may include serving subpoenas, locating witnesses, preparing exhibits, executing arrest/search warrants, and testifying before a grand jury or during trial.

At the conclusion of any court action, OIG advises the agency of the court results. For those investigations that do not result in a trial but are handled administratively by the agency, OIG monitors any corrective or disciplinary action that may be taken by the agency. OIG collects data summarizing the court and administrative results of its investigations and includes this data in its semiannual report to Congress.

As a complement to the investigation function, OIG also conducts a limited number of Event Inquiries. These Inquiries are investigative types of efforts that examine an event or issue without focusing specifically on individual conduct. These reports identify institutional weaknesses that led to a problem or allowed it to occur.

HOTLINE

In 1991, the OIG at NRC established the Hotline Program to provide NRC employees, licensee employees, contract employees, and the public with a confidential means of reporting to the OIG instances of fraud, waste, and abuse relating to NRC programs and operations. The toll free number (1-800-233-3497) provides easy access for individuals to report any instance of fraud, waste, or abuse. Callers may remain anonymous or request confidentiality. Trained OIG staff are available to answer calls Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. (eastern standard time). At other times, callers may leave a message on the recorder. There is no caller identification feature on any telephone within the OIG.

Individuals may also provide information by writing to Hotline personnel at the following address:

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of the Inspector General
Hotline Program
Mail Stop T-5 D28
Washington, DC 20555-0001

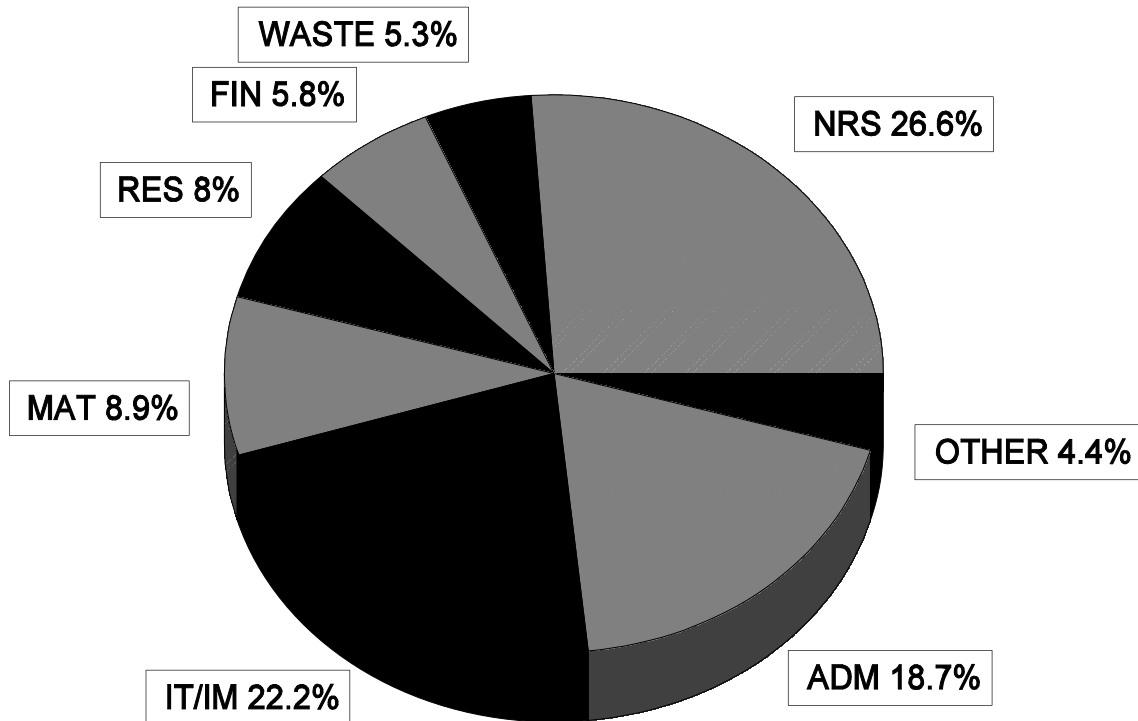
DISTRIBUTION OF OIG RESOURCES

For FY 2000, OIG has requested \$6 million and a total authorized staff of 44. This request includes funding for 36 FTE's for the audit and investigation functions (18 for Audits and 18 for Investigations).

As previously discussed, we plan our work through a strategic planning process complemented by our Issue Area Monitoring Program. This allows us to target our limited resources on NRC's most important issues and activities. As a result, this approach reduces overall costs and maximizes our coverage. We also believe this approach optimizes the use of our audit and investigative staff and provides the greatest benefit to agency management and the taxpayer.

The graphics on the following pages show the estimated resources to be devoted to each audit program/issue area in FY 2000 and the actual FY 1999 use of investigative resources.

FY 2000 Allocation of Audit Resources By OIG Issue Area*



LEGEND:

NRS- Nuclear Reactor Safety Issue Area

MAT- Nuclear Materials Safety Issue Area

WASTE - Nuclear Waste Safety Issue Area

RES - Nuclear Regulatory Research Issue Area

IT/IM- Information Technology/Information Management Issue Area

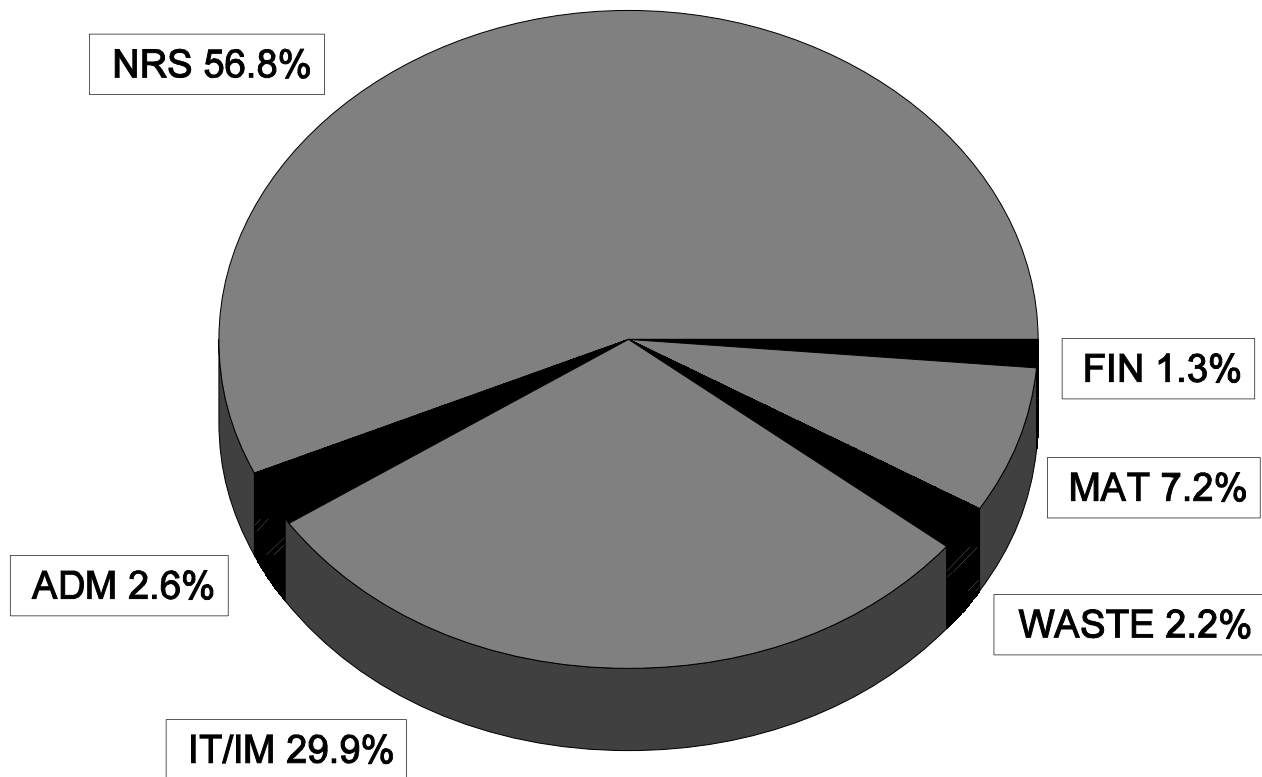
FIN- Financial Issue Area

ADM - Administrative/Human Resources Programs Issue Area

OTHER - Does not fall specifically into the issue areas listed above.

*This figure is based on hours projected to be worked on audits in each issue area during FY 2000.

**FY 1999 Actual Use of Investigative Resources
By OIG Issue Area, 10/1/98-9/15/99***



LEGEND:

NRS- Nuclear Reactor Safety Issue Area

MAT- Nuclear Materials Safety Issue Area

WASTE - Nuclear Waste Safety Issue Area

IT/IM- Information Technology/Information Management Issue Area

FIN- Financial Issue Area

ADM - Administrative/Human Resources Programs Issue Area

*This figure is based on hours worked on cases in each issue area during FY 1999.

**LONG - RANGE AUDIT STRATEGIES
BY ISSUE AREA**

NUCLEAR REACTOR SAFETY ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: **WILLIAM D. MCDOWELL - 301/415-5974**
 CATHY COLLELI - 301/415-6337

BACKGROUND

NRC's Nuclear Reactor Safety Arena encompasses the design certification, licensing, and inspection of commercial nuclear power plants under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. It also includes other regulatory functions such as evaluating safety concerns, assessing operating events, providing technical training for NRC staff, reviewing safety issues and providing legal advice to the Commission, investigating licensee wrongdoing, and administering an enforcement program.

This arena encompasses various headquarters and regional office organizations. The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation is responsible for ensuring that (1) nuclear power plants are designed and constructed properly, (2) licensees operate the facilities safely and are capable of responding adequately to an accident, and (3) reliable safeguards are in place to protect these facilities.

NRC's four regional offices direct the preponderance of the agency's inspection program. The inspection force consists of resident inspectors who are generalists in plant operations and are located at each nuclear power plant, and region-based inspectors who are specialists in certain inspection disciplines. The nature of NRC's inspections varies, from a resident's daily surveillance of plant activities to team inspections that follow up on abnormal plant events. In FY 2000, NRC plans to conduct about 2,300 hours of direct inspection at each of the 103 operating reactors to assess whether licensees are complying with regulatory requirements and individual plant technical specifications. NRC also regulates 19 nuclear plants that are retired and undergoing decommissioning.

In response to improving plant operations and other factors, NRC is revising its inspection and oversight program to apply more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing plant performance. This new approach will be tested at nine nuclear plants on a pilot basis; NRC will use the experience gained to extend the new process to all plants next year.

KEY ISSUES

- How are inspection program changes affecting NRC's knowledge and oversight of plant operations?
- How is NRC using "performance-based" concepts to link plant safety and enforcement actions?
- Are adequate safeguards in place to protect operating and retired nuclear power plants?

STRATEGY

The Nuclear Reactor Safety issue area audit plan is designed to build upon past reporting efforts as a means of focusing on important near- and long-term issues. In this regard, our short-term audits will address a variety of pertinent regulatory issues, such as assessing whether the agency's enforcement program is effective in eliciting positive change in licensee performance, and assuring that licensees set aside adequate funds to decommission nuclear plants that are no longer in service.

In addressing longer term issues, OIG has issued recent audit reports that highlight the need for NRC to more clearly define job expectations and improve techniques staff use to implement risk-informed, performance-based regulatory approaches. We will monitor and report on the agency's progress in responding to these findings. Also, an increasing number of licensees are planning to extend the operating term for their nuclear power plants. Our reviews will be designed to ensure that regardless of a plant's age, NRC's programs provide adequate regulatory oversight to ensure the continued protection of public health and safety.

NUCLEAR MATERIALS SAFETY ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: GEORGE POURCHOT - 301/415-5973
SHERRI MIOTLA - 301/415-5914

BACKGROUND

NRC's Nuclear Materials Safety Arena encompasses the public health and safety, research, operational data analysis, and other efforts related to NRC's regulation of nuclear fuel cycle facilities and nuclear materials activities. The majority of these activities are managed by the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) and NRC's four regional offices.

The Fuel Facilities Licensing and Inspection Program regulates activities involved in the conversion of uranium ore into reactor fuel. NRC inspects and licenses approximately 25 fuel facilities under Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 70 (10 CFR 70), Domestic Licensing of Special Nuclear Material. This program also provides for working with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the European Atomic Energy Community, and other countries on tracking and reporting special nuclear materials transfers. NRC continues to support the Nuclear Materials Management Safeguards System used to track the movement of domestic and foreign special nuclear materials.

The Nuclear Materials Users Licensing and Inspection Program regulates activities involving approximately 5,900 specific NRC licenses issued for the use of nuclear and other radioactive material. Uses include medical diagnosis and therapy, medical and biological research, industrial gauging, production of radiopharmaceuticals, and fabrication of smoke detectors and other sealed sources and devices.

Under the Agreement State Program, the Office of State Programs (OSP) is responsible for establishing and maintaining communications and working relationships between NRC and local governments, Native American tribes, and 31 Agreement States. With Agreement State participants, NRC also conducts Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) reviews of Agreement State and regional office programs to ensure adequacy and compatibility.

In FY's 1998 and 1999, NRC participated in a pilot program with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to simulate external regulation of DOE by testing regulatory concepts at selected sites.

KEY ISSUES

- C** Are NMSS resources for the Fuel Facilities Licensing and Inspection Program used efficiently and effectively to ensure that public health and safety are maintained by the licensees?
- C** How do NMSS and OSP adjust their resources and operations as a result of the

increasing number of Agreement States?

- What results have been achieved by conducting IMPEP reviews?
- C To what extent has NMSS developed risk-informed, performance-based regulations, and what impact have these had on its operations?

STRATEGY

To address the above key issues, we plan to focus on NRC activities related to fuel facilities, material licensees, and agency oversight of Agreement States. We will continue to monitor rulemaking under this issue area and developments related to (1) possible regulatory oversight of DOE nuclear facilities and (2) new technologies for fabricating, enriching, and disposing of reactor fuel.

NUCLEAR WASTE SAFETY ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: RUSSELL IRISH - 301/415-5972
JUDY GORDON - 301/415-5913

BACKGROUND

Nuclear waste is a byproduct of the use of radioactive materials. The strategy for disposing of these wastes depends largely on the potential hazard and the time period over which this hazard will exist. The objective of such disposal is to isolate the wastes from humans and the environment during the period of greatest hazard and to ensure that potential releases will not result in adverse impacts to public health and safety and the environment. NRC's Nuclear Waste Safety Arena comprises the following six programs: high level waste regulatory activities; regulation of low-level waste; regulation of decommissioning; radionuclide transport and decommissioning; uranium recovery licensing and inspection; and non-high level waste safety legal advice.

High-level radioactive waste results primarily from the fuel used by reactors to produce energy. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act provides a detailed approach for the long-range undertaking of high-level waste disposal. Under that approach, the Department of Energy has construction and operational responsibility, while NRC has licensing and regulatory responsibility. The Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act limits both DOE and NRC high-level waste disposal activities to issues related to the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada.

Low-level radioactive waste results from reactor operations, and from medical, academic, industrial, and other commercial uses, and generally contains relatively limited concentrations of radioactivity. The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act of 1980, amended in 1985, made States responsible for disposing of commercial low-level waste generated within their borders. Although this act encouraged States to enter compacts to allow several States to dispose of waste regionally, only three disposal facilities exist.

Decommissioning involves safely removing a facility from service and reducing residual radioactivity to a level that permits the property to be released. This action is to be taken by a licensee before termination of the license.

The Nuclear Waste Safety Arena also includes NRC's regulation of uranium recovery. The Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978, as amended, directs the NRC to amend its regulations to conform to the Environmental Protection Agency standards for uranium mill tailings reclamation and groundwater cleanup, and to regulate the reclamation of tailings and groundwater cleanup from licensed uranium mills. It also directs NRC to review and concur in the reclamation of uranium mill tailings and groundwater cleanup conducted by DOE at abandoned mill sites.

The radionuclide transport and decommissioning program supports the development of a performance assessment capability to assess the movement of radionuclides in the environment and consequent dose to the public from NRC-licensed facilities. Radionuclide contamination from NRC-licensed activities is a concern, and contamination can involve varied amounts of diverse types of radioactive materials and complex natural environments. This program also supports the development of rules and regulatory guidance to address decommissioning issues.

Also comprised within this arena is the provision, by the Office of the General Counsel, of legal advice and assistance to the Commission and NRC staff on low-level waste and transportation of radioactive materials and waste, and in the decommissioning of materials facilities.

KEY ISSUES

- C Does NRC have the necessary resources to review the anticipated storage and transport cask design and storage facility applications associated with spent fuel, and the review of applications submitted by the Departments of Energy and Transportation and by commercial vendors for non-spent fuel transport container designs?
- C What effect does storage of spent nuclear fuel at reactor sites have over a long period of time?
- C Is the basis of NRC's Waste Confidence Decision still justified?
- C What effect will new Environmental Protection Agency standards have on the NRC's high-level nuclear waste program?
- C How does NRC use advice provided by the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste?
- C What effect will lack of State compacts for disposing of commercial low-level waste have over a long period of time?

STRATEGY

We will continue to monitor Congress' actions regarding NRC's budget, as well as initiatives underway by the agency involving its organization, operating plan, and performance measures. As these activities unfold, we will perform audits or special evaluations to ensure that statutory and program requirements involving the programs of the Nuclear Waste Safety Arena are efficiently and effectively met.

THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REGULATORY RESEARCH ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: **BOB MOODY - 301/415-5946**
 DAVID HORN - 301/415-6490

BACKGROUND

One responsibility vested in NRC by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, is conducting research for the purpose of confirmatory assessment related to licensing, regulation, and other activities, including research related to nuclear material safety and regulation. NRC's Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) plans, recommends, and implements the agency's programs of nuclear regulatory research (except for high-level waste research). RES proactively and independently proposes improvements to NRC's regulatory programs and processes to achieve enhanced safety, efficiency, and effectiveness based on research results. RES coordinates research activities within and outside the agency, including the coordination of the development of consensus and voluntary standards. Based on research results and experience, RES resolves safety issues for nuclear power plants and other facilities regulated by NRC; assesses the effectiveness of selected NRC programs, regulations, and guidance with regard to risk reduction potential; and conducts research to reduce uncertainties in areas of potentially high risk or safety significance. RES also provides the technical basis for risk-informed and performance-based regulatory approaches including the development and application of risk-assessment methods and tools.

RES provides independent analysis of operational data and assessment of operational experience through the review, analysis, and evaluation of the safety performance of facilities licensed by NRC; collects, analyzes, and disseminates operational data; assesses trends in performance; evaluates operating experience to provide insights into, and improve the understanding of, the risk significance of events; and produces periodic performance indicators and Accident Precursor Reports. An important RES role is to keep pace with new technology such that the regulatory process does not impede the use of new technology. Key to success in fulfilling these responsibilities are cooperative activities with international partners to capitalize on RES experience and leverage scarce resources.

RES funding provides for work in a number of NRC arenas. Of the \$56,318,000 in the research program budget for FY 2000, \$48,806,000 (87%) is focused on reactor safety research, \$3,402,000 is used for the Nuclear Materials Research program, \$4,000,000 is in support of the Nuclear Waste Safety Arena, and the balance of \$110,000 is attributed to international support.

Nuclear Reactor Safety

NRC conducts a safety research program in the area of reactor and plant performance to provide an in-depth examination and understanding of operating experience and plant transients experienced by the nuclear industry, including evaluations of overall plant risk; understand and provide a technical basis for acceptance of operator/control system designs considering effects on human and total systems performance; gain an understanding of

ways to prevent and mitigate the consequences of severe core damage or core-melt accidents in nuclear power reactors; and increase the consideration of risk significance in its decision processes through the effective use of risk-informed technologies such as probabilistic risk assessment.

Reactor materials and component behavior research is conducted to assess the effects of aging, which affect virtually all active and passive components in a nuclear reactor system. Aging stems from exposure to reactor operating temperatures, irradiation environments, the water coolant, fatigue, and general wear. However, the specific aging-related degradation mechanisms of components can be difficult to identify and their effects may be difficult to quantify. Thus, research is needed to provide the data and analysis tools necessary to identify, quantify, manage, and regulate the effects of aging in nuclear power plants.

Nuclear Materials Safety

The Nuclear Materials Safety research program addresses materials criticality and radiation protection issues. It also supports development of a technical basis for renewals of licenses and certificates of compliance for dry storage systems for spent nuclear fuel and waste at independent spent fuel storage installation sites. RES conducts material criticality safety research which will result in development of appropriate criticality standards for regulating the processing, storage, and transportation of fuels of enrichments of greater than 5 percent U-235. RES also conducts Reactor Radiation Dosimetry and Health Effects Research which involves developing the technical basis for reactor regulations and standards to minimize the adverse consequences of exposure to ionizing radiation from licensed reactor activities.

Nuclear Waste Safety

Research activity in this arena focuses on decommissioning, where RES works to develop an understanding of the movement of radionuclides in the environment and consequent dose to the public from NRC-licensed facilities and methods and tools to model this movement. RES also provides the technical basis for rules and regulatory guidance to address decommissioning issues.

Other Areas

RES also supports international efforts in the area of health effects research, through ongoing studies being coordinated by the Joint Coordinating Committee for Radiation Effects Research and the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements as well as the collection and analysis of occupational exposure records as part of the Radiation Exposure Information Reporting System for FY 2000.

KEY ISSUES

- Given reductions in resources, can RES provide needed technical bases for assisting the agency in reducing unnecessary regulatory burden? Is the agency effectively identifying areas where it can capitalize on previous anticipatory research to reduce unnecessary burden?
- Will the results of international health effects studies indicate that changes in NRC's radiation protection standards are warranted?
- Is materials research adequate to identify new aging and degradation mechanisms before they become safety issues?
- Can RES adequately support the agency's move toward risk-informing 10 CFR Part 50?
- Will adequate progress be made in resolving the issues surrounding high burn-up?
- Will the agency be able to resolve open issues involving pressurized thermal shock in order to answer licensee concerns about the potential impact of this issue on license renewal?
- Has the agency implemented the agreed-to steps for resolving the issue of the disposal of waste generated by NRC research?
- Has RES addressed the issue of consolidation of its contracts and an associated reduction in contract project management FTE?
- Will research on MOX fuel be adequate to allow NRC to review licensee applications?
- Does the current RES program and budget allow the agency to provide for updating tools and methods to ensure that the latest scientific information is captured in analyses? Can the agency adequately judge the acceptability of licensee tools and methods?

STRATEGY

This area was included in previous OIG annual plans as part of the Nuclear Reactor Safety Issue Area. Due to the importance of this area and the portion of the agency's budget committed to research, we are now including it as a separate issue area. Over the past few years RES has seen significant reductions in its allotted budget. In addition, the agency has made organizational changes that have had a sizeable impact on the responsibilities of the office. We will monitor and report on the ability of the agency to maintain necessary research capabilities and to adequately supply the technical information needed for effective regulation of its licensees in light of these changes.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT ISSUE AREA

Management and Support (M&S) encompasses: (1) NRC central policy direction and legal advice for the Commission, (2) analysis of long-term policy issues, (3) administrative proceedings review and advice, (4) liaison with outside constituents and other government agencies, (5) financial management, (6) all administrative and logistical support, (7) information resources management, (8) executive management services for the Commission, (9) personnel and training, and (10) matters involving small and disadvantaged businesses and civil rights.

M&S includes management services, the offices of Chief Information Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, and policy support. Contract support funds are allocated for services and products obtained from commercial contractors and other Federal agencies such as the General Services Administration and the Office of Personnel Management.

Due to the magnitude and myriad number of programs and functions covered in this issue area, we divided this category into three sub-areas. The following pages provide the work envisioned over the next few years in this issue area and the managers assigned to each sub-area.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS AND CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE AREA

**OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: CORENTHIS B. KELLEY - 301/415-5977
GINA SMITH - 301/415-6288**

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) plans, directs, and oversees the NRC's information resources, including information technology (IT) infrastructure, applications systems, and delivery of information management services to meet the mission and goals of the agency. The OCIO ensures that IT resources are acquired and information resources are managed consistently with Federal Information Resources Management laws and regulations, including implementation of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996.

This activity encompasses the direction and coordination of agency-wide information resources planning, including development of IT and information management (IM) goals and measures, development of IT architectures and standards, and assessments of technology and trends and their applicability to NRC business needs. It also includes the NRC's computer security program, which implements administrative, technical, and physical security measures for the protection of NRC's information, automated information systems, and IT.

The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) develops, implements, and manages four major programs: Affirmative Action, Civil Rights, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and Small Business. The SBCR program's mission is to facilitate equal employment for all NRC employees and applicants for employment through an ongoing affirmative employment process; provide for prompt, fair, and impartial processing of discrimination complaints filed under applicable civil rights statutes; administer grants to HBCU faculty and graduate and undergraduate students; and ensure that small 8(a) disadvantaged and women-owned businesses have full and fair opportunity to participate in NRC procurement activities.

KEY ISSUES

- C Is NRC effectively managing its information and information technology and providing customer service to employees?
- C Is NRC adequately addressing the year 2000 computer issue?
- C Do NRC applications adequately support mission-critical programs?
- C Is NRC's Small Business and Civil Rights Program meeting its performance goals?

STRATEGY

To address the above key issues, we plan to conduct assessments of NRC's effort to address current and emerging information technology and information management issues. For example, during FY 2000, we plan to continue overseeing the agency's effort to manage and resolve year 2000 problems. We will oversee NRC's plans to develop major new management information systems.

In the longer term, we also plan to assess NRC's efforts to ensure its employees possess the requisite technical skills and abilities to carry out their duties as the agency moves into the next century. In this regard, we plan to use the results of OIG's survey of the NRC safety culture and climate as a vehicle to identify potential areas warranting our attention.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND SELECTED COMMISSION OFFICES ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: **ANTHONY C. LIPUMA - 301/415-5910**
 DORIS MARTIN - 301/415-5911
 CAMILLA BARROR - 301/415-5979

BACKGROUND

The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (CFO Act) and the statutory requirement for the agency to recover approximately 100 percent of its annual budget through the assessment and collection of license fees require that NRC exercise stringent financial controls.

A key provision of the CFO Act is the requirement for the agency to issue financial statements which are subject to audit. To produce statements that fairly present the financial condition of the NRC, the agency's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) must ensure that proper internal controls are in place and that accounting systems are operating in accordance with applicable principles and standards. Similarly, it is important that NRC fairly levies and collects license fees in a timely manner.

Other legislation of importance to the CFO is the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) and the GPRA. As a key member of the Executive Committee for Management Controls, the CFO should ensure that NRC has in place a system of internal controls sufficient to satisfy the requirements of FMFIA. Also, the CFO should ensure that the agency is implementing the necessary actions to achieve compliance with the GPRA, including the development of appropriate performance measures.

OIG's audits of NRC's FY 1999 financial statements and implementation of the FMFIA identified the absence of a cost accounting process as an internal control material weakness. Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standard Number 4, *Managerial Cost Accounting Standards*, recognizes that "the GPRA of 1993 requires each agency for each program, to establish performance indicators and measure or assess relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes of each program as a basis for comparing actual results with established goals. The nature of these legislative mandates require reporting entities to develop and report cost information on a consistent and regular basis."

In accordance with the FMFIA, the CFO developed a remediation plan to address the lack of cost accounting. OIG will review the adequacy of this plan and closely monitor its implementation.

KEY ISSUES

- C Are NRC's financial systems capable of meeting the agency's needs?
- C How will NRC develop and implement a timely and reliable cost accounting process and will it meet the intent of Federal accounting standards and pertinent laws and regulations?
- C Has NRC developed effective guidance and training programs to ensure the staff is knowledgeable of the importance of establishing effective internal control systems?
- C Is the agency's management control program accomplishing its objectives?
- C What additional actions are needed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of NRC's financial management operations?
- C Are adequate procedures in place to prevent abuse by employees authorized to use Government credit cards?¹
- C Have adequate controls been developed and implemented to prevent theft of Government property?²
- C Is NRC issuing accurate and timely bills to its licensees?
- C Will NRC's new financial system be implemented on schedule and will it fulfill NRC needs?

STRATEGY

We will continue our work in the financial area to assess how effectively NRC's internal control systems are functioning. This will provide us with a basis for our attestation of the financial statements issued by the agency, as required by the CFO Act. We will continue our annual assessment of the agency's compliance with the requirements of FMFIA and will continue our testing of selected performance data as part of our CFO audit work. In addition, we plan to review the adequacy of NRC systems used to compile results data required by the GPRA.

¹ Efforts to address this issue may involve both the audit and investigative components of the OIG.

² Same as footnote 1.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAMS ISSUE AREA

OIG ISSUE AREA MANAGERS: **STEVEN E. ZANE - 301/415-5912**
 MICHAEL STEINBERG - 301/415-5931

BACKGROUND

Administration This area includes responsibility for rent and facility management, security, administrative support services, and acquisition of goods and services. These functions directly support the staff in carrying out the agency's mission. Contract support accounted for almost 40 percent of the agency's FY 1999 budget estimate. Contract support also accounts for close to 40 percent of NRC's FY 2000 budget request. The acquisition of goods and services encompasses all aspects of contract management necessary to ensure that the agency efficiently obtains goods and services consistent with mission needs. It includes the development and implementation of NRC contracting policies and procedures; the development and application of streamlined procurement processes; and adherence to sound business practices in the negotiation, award, administration, and closeout of agency contracts.

Human Resources Human Resources includes the conduct of a variety of activities in the areas of recruitment, organization, program and policy analysis, placement, utilization, and training and development of agency employees. The Human Resources program also includes administration of NRC-wide occupational health and safety, employee assistance, health and fitness, and child development programs. FY 2000 will present a challenge to human resources management agency-wide as additional focus will be directed toward managing anticipated workforce reductions.

KEY ISSUES

- C Do the Offices of Administration and Human Resources adequately support their customers?
- C Is NRC's acquisition of goods and services timely and does it result in best value procurements?
- C Are training and development dollars directed towards the achievement of NRC's mission and performance goals?
- C Is NRC adequately safeguarding personnel, property, and information?
- C Is NRC developing and maintaining a high quality, culturally diverse workforce and applicant pool?

STRATEGY

We will continue to monitor agency actions and initiatives regarding the Administration and Human Resources programs. As these activities progress, we will perform audits or special evaluations to ensure that these programs are carried out efficiently, effectively, and economically in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

APPENDIX II

AUDITS PLANNED FOR FY 2000

AUDITS PLANNED FOR FY 2000

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SPECIAL EVALUATION OF NRC'S 10 MOST SERIOUS MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regional Offices

TYPE OF EVALUATION

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

In response to a congressional request in January 1998, the Inspector General identified what he believed were the 10 most serious management challenges facing the NRC. The Inspector General based these 10 management challenges on the overall work of the office, the OIG staff's general knowledge of agency operations, and other relevant information. In August 1998, Congress asked the Inspector General to update this list. At that time, the Inspector General used the same basis to add to or delete from the original listing. In a September 22, 1999, letter from the Chairs of the House and Senate Oversight Committees, House and Senate Budget Committees, and the House Majority Leader, the Inspector General was asked for an update of last year's listing of the most serious management challenges facing the agency. The letter also requested a description of the problems, previous OIG/General Accounting Office work, and significant open audit recommendations. Further, the congressional request asked the Inspector General to provide an assessment of the agency's efforts to resolve the issues; compare/contrast this year's listing with previous ones, with some explanation; and identify programs that "have had questionable success in achieving results."

SPECIAL EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

The objective of the special evaluation will be to gather sufficient information to respond to the congressional request.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This special evaluation will be an ongoing effort subject to revised resource estimates. Currently, it is estimated that this evaluation will require about 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Because this effort involves the entire agency, it is not being assigned to a specific issue area.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This evaluation addresses all management challenges.¹

¹ See pp. 1-2, first section of this document, for a numbered listing of the top 10 management challenges facing the NRC, as identified by the OIG in response to a congressional request in August 1998.

REVIEW OF NRC'S ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

NRC is responsible for regulating 103 operating nuclear power plants and 19 plants that have been retired, and activities involving about 5,900 materials licenses issued for the use of nuclear and other radioactive material. The agency has developed an enforcement program to help ensure that licensees comply with regulatory requirements, correct violations that may be adverse to public health and safety, and deter future violations. Staff in the agency's four regional offices play an important role in administering the program. Concerns have been expressed that the enforcement program is not consistent between regional offices, and frequently does not focus on issues that have safety significance. The agency has committed to revise the program to provide better alignment between enforcement actions and the safety significance of the identified violation, and institute measures to ensure that licensee programs are effective in correcting and preventing recurrence of the violation.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this audit is to assess whether the revisions to NRC's enforcement program are effective in helping NRC staff incorporate consistency in (1) identifying a nexus to safety, and (2) ensuring licensee programs correct and prevent recurrent violations.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1, 5, and 8.

REVIEW OF NRC'S NUCLEAR PLANT INSPECTION PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

As a result of considerable debate within and external to the agency, NRC is revising its inspection and oversight program for operating nuclear reactors. The agency hopes to develop and apply more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing plant performance. This new approach will be tested at nine nuclear plants on a pilot basis; the experience gained will be used to extend the new process to all plants next year. It is envisioned that the new program will produce several benefits, including (1) a better focus on plant risk, (2) the use of more objective performance measurements, and (3) the minimizing of unnecessary regulatory burdens.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are to assess whether NRC staff have developed mechanisms to effectively incorporate results from the pilot efforts into the operating reactor inspection program.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,100 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1 and 5.

REVIEW OF NRC'S FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

Assessments have shown that fires in nuclear power plants can be risk significant. NRC's regulations are designed to provide reasonable assurance that nuclear power plants will be protected during and after a fire. Since the early 1980's there has been considerable debate regarding the measures licensees must employ to adequately protect against fires. Recent fire protection inspections at several nuclear power plants found that deficiencies could exist in one or more layers of fire protection defense at any given plant. Questions have also been raised as to whether the adequacy of NRC guidance and the consistency of staff interpretations provided to licensees could be a factor in these findings.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are to assess whether (1) NRC's inspection program is adequate to identify fire protection deficiencies at nuclear power plants, and (2) agency guidance to licensees is clear and consistent.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,100 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1 and 5.

REVIEW OF NRC'S SAFEGUARDS PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

NRC regulations require that licensees implement security precautions to safeguard nuclear power plants against terrorist activities. However, debate has surfaced regarding the extent to which tests should be given to assess the effectiveness of licensee security programs. In addition, while agency staff have been working with law enforcement agencies to improve governmental response to security incidents, the milestones for implementing program improvements are unclear. Finally, concerns have been expressed that changes to NRC's safeguards program could reduce the effectiveness of licensee security measures.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are to determine (1) what progress is being made to improve NRC's response to security incidents, and (2) whether additional efforts are needed to strengthen the safeguards program.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1, 5, and 7.

REVIEW OF NRC'S SPENT FUEL POOL INSPECTION PROGRAM AT DORMANT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

Title 10, Section 50.2, of the Code of Federal Regulations defines decommissioning as the safe removal of a facility from service and reduction of residual radioactivity to a level that permits the release of the property for unrestricted use. Power reactor licensees may choose between several decommissioning alternatives, and must complete decommissioning activities within 60 years of ceasing plant operation.

There are currently 19 nuclear power plants in various stages of decommissioning, and some predict that licensees may decide to retire additional plants in the foreseeable future. Although these plants are no longer in service, the spent nuclear fuel accumulated during their years of operation will remain on site for an extended period of time. Several recent incidents have raised questions about whether NRC and licensees have exercised adequate oversight over the spent fuel pools at dormant nuclear power plants.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are to assess whether NRC's spent fuel pool inspection program at dormant plants is adequate to ensure (1) consistent oversight of the condition of spent fuel pools, (2) licensees are responsive to correcting identified problems, and (3) the continued integrity of spent nuclear fuel.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1 and 7.

REVIEW OF NRC'S PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO TECHNICAL INFORMATION REQUESTS FOR ACTION

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

The operation and regulation of nuclear power plants raises many technical questions and issues that NRC's regional office staff are asked to address. For those issues where no immediate answer is available, NRC has created the Technical Information Request for Action (TIA) process to provide staff with clarification on both technical and generic matters. Some TIA's have gone unanswered for 2 to 3 years, which requires that staff either put the question on hold, or negotiate an interim response with licensees.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are to determine (1) the extent of the TIA backlog, (2) the impact the backlog has on licensee and regional office operations, and (3) what, if any, actions are underway to improve the TIA process.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 800 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Reactor Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 1 and 7.

REVIEW OF NRC'S FUEL FACILITIES LICENSING AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

NRC licenses and inspects about 25 commercial facilities involved in processing and fabricating uranium ore into nuclear reactor fuel. The agency's Fuel Facilities and Inspection Program seeks to ensure that licensees adequately protect the public health and safety, worker safety, and the environment when source or special nuclear material is used during the nuclear fuel production cycle. For FY 2000, approximately \$14 million is budgeted for oversight, inspections, and licensing for this program.

NRC has been revising its fuel facilities program for several years as a result of (1) weaknesses identified by the Materials Regulatory Review Task Force, (2) assumption of regulatory oversight over the U.S. Enrichment Corporation's two gaseous diffusion enrichment plants, (3) and potential assumption of regulatory oversight over new enrichment facilities. In moving toward a performance-based, risk-informed regulatory process, NRC is revising 10 CFR Part 70, Domestic Licensing of Special Nuclear Material.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit will be to (1) review the agency's progress in correcting regulatory weaknesses identified by the Materials Regulatory Review Task Force, and (2) assess the effectiveness of NRC's risk-informed, performance-based programs and internal controls in ensuring that fuel facility activities do not pose a threat to public health and safety.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require approximately 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Materials Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 1.

REVIEW OF THE IMPACT THAT ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT STATES HAVE ON NRC OPERATIONS

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

Currently, NRC regulates the use of radioactive materials for about 5,900 licenses in 20 States. The agency also maintains the infrastructure of regulations and supporting guidance that benefit its licensees and 31 Agreement States which regulate about 15,000 licenses. Recently, several States have become active in seeking Agreement State status. NRC projects that by FY 2003, its license base could fall by one-third to 3,900.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this audit will be to determine whether the agency is appropriately adjusting its resources and operations as a result of transferring the regulation of materials licenses to new Agreement States.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require approximately 1,000 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Materials Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenges 1 and 3.

REVIEW OF NRC'S HIGH-LEVEL WASTE PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters; San Antonio, Texas; Yucca Mountain, Nevada

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

Under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987, and the Energy Policy Act of 1992, NRC is responsible for the licensing of a high-level waste storage and disposal facility which DOE will construct, operate, and permanently close. Under current legislation, DOE is studying the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada to determine its suitability as a repository site.

NMSS manages the agency's High-Level Waste (HLW) program and receives support from RES. NRC established the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to report to and advise NRC on nuclear waste management. Additionally, NRC established the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses to provide technical assistance and conduct research for the HLW program.

OIG planned reviews of the HLW Regulatory program in FY's 1995 and 1996. However, during that time, DOE initiated a revised program approach for its site suitability and characterization studies. Congress also initiated several legislative proposals which would potentially revise the priorities of current DOE work. Additionally, NRC realigned its HLW program during FY's 1996 and 1997 in response to (1) a reduction in congressional budget appropriations for NRC in FY 1997; (2) reorganization of the DOE program at Yucca Mountain; and (3) a 1995 report issued to the Environmental Protection Agency by the National Academy of Sciences on new geologic disposal standards for Yucca Mountain. Although the anticipated congressional actions never materialized, DOE did institute a revised program plan. This plan included completion of a site viability assessment of Yucca Mountain and a report on its results to Congress. DOE completed its viability assessment report and submitted it to the President in December 1998. The decision regarding whether or not to recommend the site as a suitable location to store and dispose HLW is currently scheduled for FY 2001.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this review will be to determine the status of NRC's HLW program in relation to DOE's projected date for submitting a license application to the agency for initiating construction of the HLW repository at Yucca Mountain. In particular, we will evaluate if NRC is sufficiently positioned to evaluate the license application in order to meet its statutory mandate of licensing the repository within 3 to 4 years of receiving DOE's

license application.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,200 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Waste Safety

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenges 1 and 7.

REVIEW OF NRC'S RESEARCH EFFORTS RELATED TO DRY CASK STORAGE

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

The Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) conducts research related to dry cask storage risk assessment. Several recent events or problems have indicated that the industry and NRC do not fully understand the technical aspects of dry cask storage. Recent budget cuts in this area of research may limit NRC's ability to adequately oversee this area. Additionally, some licensees have complained that they are running out of storage options due to NRC's inaction in this area.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this audit will be to examine the ability of RES to provide the agency with dry cask storage information sufficient to adequately regulate this area.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Regulatory Research

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This review addresses management challenges 7 and 9.

REVIEW OF NRC'S IMPLEMENTATION OF OMB CIRCULAR A-119

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

OMB Circular A-119, revised February 10, 1998, is titled *Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities*. NRC states that in FY 2000, it will implement a plan in response to OMB Circular A-119 and directed toward the effective, efficient, and consistent use of industry codes, standards, and guides important to safety. This includes stakeholder meetings to discuss improvement in the process for endorsing codes and standards, and potential areas for development of codes and standards or industry guides.

The agency's plan will (1) streamline and simplify the NRC's internal process for endorsing codes and standards; (2) make appropriate use of all available codes, standards, and guides; and (3) identify areas in which new codes, standards, or guides are needed. In FY 1999 preparatory work, NRC was to have reviewed other relevant Federal agency practices, met with standards-developing organizations, and developed the plan.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit will be to evaluate the agency's preparatory work and plan prior to implementation and to assess whether it meets OMB requirements.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 800 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Nuclear Regulatory Research

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This review addresses management challenge 10.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NRC'S IT COORDINATOR POSITION

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regional Offices, Technical Training Center

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

The IT Coordinator serves as an office representative for IT services and acts as a liaison between office staff and OCIO to ensure that IT service requests are completed. Under the agency's current approach for managing IT initiatives, IT Coordinators now coordinate office-specific IT efforts. IT Coordinators are designated by their respective office directors and work at a variety of position levels. There are approximately 46 IT Coordinators in the agency located in headquarters, each of the four regional offices, and at the training center in Chattanooga, TN.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit will be (1) to examine the IT Coordinator position and its role in information systems activities and (2) to determine whether the IT Coordinator position is effective in helping the agency meet its IT needs.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 800 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Information Technology/Information Management

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This review addresses management challenge 2.

REVIEW OF NRC'S APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT DIVISION -- BUSINESS AREA TEAMS

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

OCIO has been reorganized to align systems development teams with major NRC business areas. The staff of the Applications Development Division consists of teams tied to specific agency business areas. This allows OCIO staff to become more familiar with both the business areas and the IT applications that support them. Using this more targeted approach, OCIO would better align IT/IM resources with agency and program office priorities.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

This objective of this audit will be to determine whether this realignment is successfully achieving its goals.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Information Technology/Information Management

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This review addresses management challenge 2.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF AGENCY MEASURES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

PLANNED LOCATIONS

Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

Improving public confidence is a major agency objective. NRC's *Strategic Plan, Fiscal Year 1997 - Fiscal Year 2002*, specifies as one of NRC's goals: "Provide the public, those we regulate, and other stakeholders in the national and international community, with clear and accurate information about, and a meaningful role in, NRC's regulatory program so that there will be respect for and confidence in that program."

In a March 14, 1997, staff requirements memorandum (SRM), the Commission directed the Executive Council (EC) to create a coordinating group to develop a plan to implement the Commission's policy guidance in Direction Setting Issue (DSI) #14, "Public Communications Initiatives." This DSI addressed the need to improve the quality, clarity, and credibility of communications with all NRC stakeholders, and particularly with the general public. The SRM focused on improvements in the broad areas of more effective written and oral communications with the public, early identification of public concerns, early involvement of the public in NRC regulatory decisions of substantial interest or concern, and more effective outreach to the general public on the roles and responsibilities of the NRC. The EC appointed the Communications Coordinating Committee (CCC) to address the issues and offer recommendations. The CCC produced its report on March 24, 1998.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit will be 1) to assess the effectiveness of the agency's measures to improve public confidence, and 2) to assess the agency's progress in implementing the CCC's and any other relevant recommendations concerning this issue.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Information Technology/Information Management

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenge 5.

REVIEW OF NRC'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE CLINGER-COHEN ACT

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

The Clinger-Cohen Act directs OMB to establish clear and concise direction regarding investments in major information systems, and to enforce that direction through the budget process. The Director, OMB, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Act for all Federal agencies. The Act sets guidance for improving the acquisition, use, and disposal of information technology by the Federal Government to improve the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of Federal programs. It also addresses dissemination of public information and reduction of information collection burdens on the public. In prior audit work, OIG has taken a preliminary look at the agency's implementation of the Act.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this audit will be to determine NRC compliance with the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act. Specifically, we will evaluate the agency's management control program for adherence to the Act and NRC policies and procedures. This review would look at the agency's return on investment as required by the Act and whether NRC is meeting the overall intent of the Act.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 staff hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Information Technology/Information Management

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 2.

REVIEW OF GENERAL CONTROLS FOR SELECTED NRC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regions, Technical Training Center

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

General controls are the structure, policies, and procedures that apply to an entity's overall computer operations. They create the environment in which applications systems and controls operate. There are six major categories of general controls. They are the entity-wide security program, access controls, application software development and change controls, segregation of duties, system software, and service continuity.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this review will be to survey NRC systems and select one or more for a general controls review and assess the adequacy of those controls.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This review will require about 1,200 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Information Technology/Information Management

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 2.

AUDIT OF NRC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regions

TYPE OF AUDIT

Financial (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 1990, the President signed into law the Chief Financial Officers Act. The Act, in essence, called for agencies to issue audited financial statements on an annual basis. The OIG is required to audit NRC's financial statements or obtain the services of an independent, external audit firm to perform the audit.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

OIG will audit NRC's financial statements in accordance with applicable auditing standards.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 300 hours of OIG effort.²

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Financial

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 6.

²

The audit, with OIG oversight, will be conducted by an independent contractor.

REVIEW OF NRC'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL MANAGERS' FINANCIAL INTEGRITY ACT (FMFIA)

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters

TYPE OF AUDIT

Financial (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) establishes specific requirements with regard to management controls. The agency head must establish controls that reasonably ensure that (1) obligations and costs comply with applicable law, (2) assets are safeguarded against waste, loss, unauthorized use, or misappropriation, and (3) revenues and expenditures are properly recorded and accounted for. In addition, the agency head must evaluate and report annually on the control and financial systems that protect the integrity of Federal programs.

OMB Circular A-123 provides guidance to Federal managers on improving the accountability and effectiveness of Federal programs and operations, and achieving compliance with FMFIA, by establishing, assessing, correcting, and reporting on management controls. The Executive Committee for Management Controls, chaired by the Executive Director for Operations, has overall responsibility for implementing FMFIA and OMB Circular A-123 within NRC.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this audit will be to determine NRC's compliance with the requirements of FMFIA. Specifically, we will evaluate the agency's management control program for adherence to OMB Circular A-123 and related NRC policies and procedures.

OIG will assess each office's reasonable assurance statement to ensure that all significant management control weaknesses identified during the current year were reported to the Executive Committee.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 1,000 staff hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Financial

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 6.

REVIEW OF NRC'S TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regions, Technical Training Center

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority 1)

BACKGROUND

The agency's training and development program is composed of three major task areas: external training, in-house training and development, and management development. NRC employee training should contribute to achievement of the agency's mission and performance goals. Additionally, the training should help employees reach their developmental and career goals.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

We plan to survey the training and development program to examine whether it is managed efficiently, effectively, and economically. Our objective will be to identify specific issues for detailed audit and then initiate one or more audits, if needed.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The survey and subsequent audit(s) (if necessary) will require about 1,400 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Administrative/Human Resources Programs

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This addresses management challenge 1.

REVIEW OF THE INSPECTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

OIG has issued two reports on NRC's inspector training program dated November 1994 and August 1995, respectively. The first report disclosed that the agency was complying with the initial qualification requirements for inspectors; however, mandatory post qualification training requirements were not fully met and needed clarification. This report made three recommendations to remedy the problems identified. The second report found a need for improved coordination and communication among the offices involved in the training planning and delivery processes. It also disclosed that the roles and responsibilities of the two advisory groups established to oversee training issues needed to be more clearly defined. This report made six recommendations to NRC management. NRC management agreed with all the recommendations and provided an action plan to implement them. NRC management is interested in knowing whether the actions to improve the program were effective. In addition, NRC management raised questions about the expenditure of FTE's for inspector training and whether all required training is necessary, especially given the changes to the inspection program.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit will be (1) to determine whether the inspector training program as it presently stands is appropriate, given the changes to the inspection program, and (2) whether the agency actions in response to the prior OIG recommendations have been implemented and were effective in resolving previous problems.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 700 hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Administrative/Human Resources Programs

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenge 1.

REVIEW OF NRC'S USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Regional Offices, Technical Training Center (TTC)

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority II)

BACKGROUND

In May 1996, OIG issued a report concerning NRC's video conferencing capabilities and utilization. The report suggested that NRC needed to (1) consider a centralized, agency-wide approach to acquiring and implementing video conferencing, and (2) formally study how to utilize this technology in the most effective way. In November 1997, NRC's Chief Information Officer issued Yellow Announcement 109 announcing the agencywide availability of video teleconferencing to support the agency's business needs.

At the time of the Yellow Announcement, there were four video teleconferencing systems available at NRC Headquarters, with a portable system expected for later that year. Each regional office was equipped with one video teleconferencing system, and the TTC was equipped with two. According to the Yellow Announcement, the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Office of Administration were working together to accomplish the transition and support to the agencywide implementation of NRC's video conferencing program.

It was anticipated that NRC's video conferencing program would support and enhance business needs, such as instructional training for regional employees, multiple location meetings, interaction between Headquarters and the regional offices, and meetings with licensees; provide increased access to the public; and serve as a cost-effective alternative to travel.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this audit are 1) to determine whether the anticipated cost and other benefits have resulted as a result of the video conferencing program, and 2) whether NRC's video conferencing program is being run in an efficient manner. We will attempt to use agency's video conferencing wherever possible during the course of this audit.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require about 800 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Administrative/Human Resources Programs

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenge 5.

REVIEW OF NRC'S USE OF CONTRACTOR SUPPORT

PLANNED LOCATIONS

NRC Headquarters, Selected Regional Offices

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

NRC relies heavily on contractors in carrying out its mission. NRC requested about \$175 million for FY 2000 for contractor support. Contractors perform a myriad of functions, activities, and tasks for the agency in a number of areas including systems development and maintenance, customer support services, and technical studies and assistance. Although OIG has examined some aspects of NRC's contracting activities, OIG has not reviewed them in the aggregate.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

This review will seek to determine what work contractors are performing for NRC in the aggregate, whether they are duplicating functions performed by agency employees, whether the level of contractor usage is justified, whether the usage level puts the agency at risk and how contractors contribute to NRC achieving its goals.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This audit will require 1,000 staff hours of effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Administrative/Human Resources Programs

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit will address management challenge 4.

REVIEW OF NRC'S IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE 6.1, RESOLUTION AND FOLLOW-UP OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

TYPE OF AUDIT

Performance (Priority I)

BACKGROUND

Audit follow-up is an integral part of good management and is a shared responsibility of agency management and auditors. Corrective action by management on agreed upon findings and recommendations is essential to improving the effectiveness of agency operations.

OMB Circular A-50, *Audit Follow-up*, requires each agency to establish systems to assure the prompt and proper resolution and implementation of audit recommendations. Such systems are to provide a complete record of actions taken on all recommendations.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this review will be to determine the adequacy of NRC's follow-up system. The review will examine the documentation used to close audit recommendation and also visit the affected offices to verify implementation.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

This review will require about 320 hours of staff effort.

ISSUE AREA

Management and Support: Administrative/Human Resources Programs

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This audit addresses management challenges 7 and 10.

**LISTING OF ISSUE AREAS
AND DESIGNATED ISSUE AREA MANAGERS**

ISSUE AREAS AND DESIGNATED ISSUE AREA MANAGERS

Nuclear Reactor Safety Arena

Bill McDowell

Cathy Colleli

Nuclear Materials Safety Arena

George Pourchot

Sherri Miotla

Nuclear Waste Safety Arena

Russ Irish

Judy Gordon

Nuclear Regulatory Research

Bob Moody

David Horn

Management and Support:

Information Technology/Information Management

Ren Kelley

Gina Smith

Financial

Tony Lipuma

Doris Martin

Camilla Barror

Administration/Human Resources Programs

Steve Zane

Michael Steinberg

**LISTING OF ABBREVIATIONS
AND ACRONYMS**

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADM	Administrative/Human Resources Programs Issue Area
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFO Act	Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990
CFR	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
CISSCO	Comprehensive Information Systems Support Contract
DOE	Department of Energy
DPO	Differing Professional Opinion
DPV	Differing Professional View
EC	Executive Council
FIN	Financial Issue Area
FMFIA	Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act
FTE	full-time equivalent
FY	fiscal year
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HLW	high-level waste
IAM	Issue Area Manager
IG	Inspector General
IT	information technology
IT/IM	Information Technology/Information Management Issue Area
ITMRA	Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996
M&S	Management and Support Issue Area
MAT	Nuclear Materials Safety Issue Area
NMSS	Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRS	Nuclear Reactor Safety Issue Area
OBRA	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
RES	Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research. Also used to reflect this issue area.
SRA	Senior Reactor Analyst
WASTE	Nuclear Waste Safety Issue Area
Y2K	Year 2000